

A FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF JULY 7th INCIDENT
By General Ching Teh-Chun

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1. PROLOGUE

A. The Political and Military Conditions in Hopei and Chahar Provinces Prior to the War of Resistance.

1. Political--Before the Incident of July 7th, the Hopei-Chahar Political Council was the responsible institution in charge of political affairs in Hopei and Chahar Provinces. General Sun Che-Yuan was the Chairman of the said Council, being appointed by the National Government. The Council had jurisdiction over Hopei and Chahar Provinces and Peiping and Tientsin Municipalities. General Feng Chi-An and General Liu Ju-Ming were the Governor of Hopei Province and Chahar Province respectively. I, myself, was then Mayor of Peiping, while General Chang Chi-Chung, who later fell gallantly for the country as Commander-in-Chief, was then Mayor of Tientsin.

Since their costless invasion of the Chinese North-Eastern three Provinces, followed by the invasion of the Jehol Province, and the Battle of the Great Wall, the Japanese aggressors considered all these Provinces in North China as something that could be very easily taken over. Peiping and Tientsin, therefore, became the front line of national defense. However, all the policies of the local authorities in Hopei, Chahar, Peiping and Tientsin were formulated and carried out in conformity with instructions and laws proclaimed by the National Government. For example, the election of representatives of the People's Congress, the concentrated military training of all college students, were considered by the Japanese aggressors as measures inconsistent with the status of special area. Repeatedly, Japanese opened negotiations and interfered with such administration, but all the inducements and threats failed. Finally they resorted to the military aggression on July 7th, 1937.

2. Military--In North China, the 29th Army was the main force, which had its garrisons all over Hopei, Chahar, Peiping and Tientsin. At the time of the Incident, the 37th Division under the command of General Feng Chi-An was stationed in the suburbs of Peiping, namely, Pan-Yuan, Peip-Yuan, Si-Yuan, Lukuo-chiao (Marco Polo Bridge), Chan-Sin-Tien, and Paoting. The 38th Division under the command of General

Chang Chi-Chung was stationed at Tientsin, Young-Chung, Langfang, Chuan-Liang, Chen, Taku, Tangku, and along the Tientsin-Pukow Railway such as Ma-Chan and Tsangchow. The 143rd Division under the command of General Liu Ju-Ming was stationed in the Chahar Province, at Kalgan, Chang-Pei, Chai-Kuo-Pao, Yeng-Ching, Nankow, etc. The 132nd Division under the command of General Chao-Teng-Yu was spread over the southern part of Hopei Province, namely, Ta-Ming, Ho-Chien, Asien-Hsien, Jen-Chiu, etc.

Lukuochiao (Marco Polo Bridge) where the Incident of July 7th broke out, is situated about 20 Li southwest to the Caang-Yi Gate of Peiping City. The District Government of the Wan-Ping Hsien was at the east of the bridge. The city of Wan-Ping was not large. Both inside and outside of the city of Wan-Ping were guarded by troops of the 37th Division. This place, being on the main communication line west of Peiping, was strategically very important. Japanese forces, stationed at Fengtai, had repeatedly demanded the withdrawal of the Chinese garrison from this place, and also from Chan-Sin-Tien. All these demands were refused by our side in unmistakable terms. In the winter of 1936, Japanese intended to reinforce their garrison force, and planned to build barracks and airfield in the area between Fengtai and Lukuochiao (Marco Polo Bridge), in order to control completely North China. In spite of their efforts in repeated negotiations, we refused them in severe wordings. Thus frustrated, Japanese changed their tactics. They attempted to lay their hands on the local inhabitants by inducing and threatening them to lease or sell the lands voluntarily to the Japanese. But, according to the report of Commissioner Wang Leng-Chai, who governed that area, the local residents had no intention to lease or to sell the lands belonging to them. The residents made sworn statements to that effect and authenticated these statements with their finger prints. One day, HASHIMOTO, the Chief of Staff of the Japanese Garrison Forces in North China, Wachi, and some other Japanese officers called on me and again requested to buy these lands. They argued that the local inhabitants desired to lease or sell voluntarily, yet it could not be realized, apparently due to the opposition of the Government in North China. My reply was that, no right of land in any country could be freely leased or sold to foreigners. If we asked for a lease or purchase of land in the vicinity of Tokyo, could that be allowed by your Government. In the least minimum, landed properties owned by private persons who enjoy ownership of such properties could not be disposed of by the Government at will. Since you asserted that the residents were willing to sell their lands, what was the proof of this assertion. HASHIMOTO countered by demanding us to produce proof of the unwillingness to lease or sell their lands on the part of the residents. Upon this I produced the sworn statements of the residents authenticated with their finger prints and forwarded to me by Commissioner Wang, to the effect that they would not sell any land. HASHIMOTO and other Japanese officers, upon seeing these documents, could not say anything. This episode which brought disgrace and anger to them must have embittered them. From that time on, under the pretext of maneuvers they hoped to invade and

occupy Wan-Ping City by catching us unprepared. This was the immediate cause leading to the outbreak of the Incident.

B. Stages of Japanese Aggressions

1. Alienation and Estrangement--The Japanese attempted to alienate and estrange the local authorities in North China from the Central Government by inducement and by threat hoping thereby to disintegrate and destroy separate areas one after another. The numerous attempts they made could be summed up as inducement by bribery and threat by force. All these attempts, however, were met with flat refusal from the local authorities. Their conspiracy could by no means be realized. This was the first stage of enemy aggression in North China, a period running roughly from the Autumn 1933 to the Summer 1936.

2. Economic Monopoly--The Japanese hoped to attack economic monopoly under the mask of friendship and fraternization and the watchword, "equality and reciprocity." The concrete demands made by them were: a. To construct a Tsang-Shih Railway (between Tsangchow and Shih-Chia-Chwang, both in southern Hopei), b. To develop the Lung-Yen Iron Mines (in Chahar Province), and c. To revise Maritime Custom Tariffs at Tientsin, in such a way as to raise tariffs on European and American commodities, and to lower tariffs on Japanese commodities.

All these demands, the acceptance of which would impair the sovereignty of China, were flatly refused. This was the second stage of Japanese aggression in north China. The period covered ran roughly from the Summer 1936 to the Spring 1937.

3. Threat by Armed Forces--After realizing that alienation, estrangement, and attempts to attain economic monopoly had all failed, the Japanese finally decided upon threat by armed force. They hoped to reach their goal without fighting. At the beginning of the Lukuechiao (Marco Polo Bridge Incident), Japanese had no anticipation other than Chinese submission after a blow dealt to the Chinese by their comparatively superior forces. They anticipated that Hopei, Shansi, Shantung, Chahar, and Dueshuen Provinces could thus be turned into a region of special status (for the import of the word "special", see translator's note 1), thus realizing the second step in the plan of General TANAKA for the conquest of the whole word. They never thought that, at the call of our supreme leader, all Chinese would rise and take up the War of Resistance on all fronts. As to the drawn-out War of Resistance over long, long period, and the fact that we never wavered all the way through, was even more unexpected by the enemy.

11. FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF THE INCIDENT.

At 0010, in the evening of July 7th, 1937, I received a report from the Kopei-Chahar Foreign Affairs Commission, which stated that the said commission had received a telephone call from MATSUI, the Chief of the Japanese Special Service Board, saying: "One company of Japanese troops, in night maneuver in the vicinity of Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge) just a while ago, seemed to have heard a few gun shots fired by soldiers of the 37th Division of the 29th Army stationed in the city of Wan-Ping. The gun shots brought some confusion of the troops in maneuver. As a result of the roll call, one Japanese soldier was found to be missing. Japanese troops demanded to enter and search the city of Wan-Ping this very evening. The said commission asked instructions by telephone as to how to deal with the situation. I immediately replied that Japanese troops, maneuvering in Chinese territory at their own will, were in violation of international law. Neither had they notified us in advance, nor had they obtained our permission. The Chinese Government has no responsibility whatsoever for the alleged missing soldier. Even if it is true that a soldier was really missing, we shall order the Chinese troops stationed at Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge) to conduct a search for the Japanese soldier on our own behalf in cooperation with local police forces. My instructions were transmitted to the Japanese by the Kopei-Chahar Foreign Affairs Commission. Soon thereafter, the said commission again telephoned me and reported that after transmission of the reply, both the Japanese Special Service Board and the Japanese troops were not satisfied. The Japanese insisted on conducting a search in the city by force. If refused, they decided to encircle the walled city. I again immediately replied that in case of such unreasonableness on the part of Japanese, so violent and barbarous we, for the sake of self-defense, could only take the course of resolute resistance. Then I called on Regiment Commander Chi Sin-Wen over the telephone. At that time, one battalion of the regiment under his command was in charge of garrison duties at Lukouchiao, while other two battalions and his Regiment Headquarters were at Chan-Sin-Tien. I asked Commander Chi whether his regiment had maneuvered tonight. Chi replied in the negative. I asked him whether there were any Japanese troops maneuvering in the vicinity of Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge). Chi replied that he had received no such information, but that he would immediately send out his men to investigate. Thereupon, I informed him the negotiations between the Japanese and us, and ordered him to send at once able men to proceed toward the direction of Fengtai, to detect possible Japanese troop movements. On the other hand, I ordered by telephone, Commissioner Wang Lun-Chai, who was concurrently the Magistrate of Wan-Ping T'ien, to investigate and to report on the maneuvering of Japanese troops and whether any Japanese soldier was missing. Soon, I received a telephone call from Commander Chi, who reported that, according to the report of the officer

dispatched towards the direction of Fengtai, about a battalion of Japanese troops with six pieces of artillery, was now advancing from Fengtai towards Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge), and whether there was any reinforcements following this column had to await further detection. Thereupon, as the Vice-Commander of the 29th Army, I immediately ordered Regiment Commander Chi to well guard the city of Wan-Ping, that not a single Japanese soldier was to be allowed to come in, that not a single inch of territory was to be allowed to lose, that in virtue of our responsibility as soldiers, to guard our territory, the Wan-Ping city would be, in case of necessity, the most precious and glorious graveyard of our ranks and files, that we should share the same fate with the city. If they did not open fire first, we should not first open fire upon them. If they should first open fire, we were sure to deal them fatal blows. After having my order, Chi sent another battalion to enforce the guard at Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge), and he himself led the battalion there to reinforce the defense. At the same time, Commissioner Wang Lun-Chai came to Peiping to report in person the factual result of his investigation. So, I sent Commissioner Wang, together with Wei Tsung-Han, Commissioner of Foreign Affairs of Hopei-Chahar Provinces, Lin Ken-Yu, also a member under Commissioner Wei, and Chou Jun-Ye, Chief of Communication Section, of the Pacification Headquarters, to negotiate with MATSUI. At 0500 in the morning, successive reports informed me that Japanese troops had come to the edge of the city and demanded the entry of the city by force, that we had to prepare for the defense on the one hand and to try to stop their entry by negotiation on the other. The Japanese, realizing by that time that there was no hope for them to take the city of Wan-Ping without fighting, finally encircled it on three sides. Our forces put up defense works on the walls. Around 0600, enemy machine gun fire began to attack the city, and enemy forces came towards it. This was the very beginning of the Sino-Japanese war. And the responsibility of the Incident was also definitely fixed (upon Japan).

Hostilities on the 8th and 9th of July were heavy, and Japanese suffered many casualties. The railway bridge leading to Chan-Sin-tien was occupied by Japanese in the morning of the 8th, and on the same night, two companies of Chinese troops, each soldier equipped with a pistol, a sword, and four hand grenades, moved up stealthily. They suddenly attacked, when they approached the bridge head. The enemy, about a company strong, was surprised and most of them were killed. Japanese, seeing that they were suffering setbacks, sent MATSUI and others to me on the following day, and asked for negotiation. I had foreseen their intention before they came, so I refused them. Soon thereafter, they came again and explained the intention of truce, adding that the missing soldier had already been found, so that a peaceful settlement would be feasible. We began to discuss and, as a result, decided on three conditions: (a) All military actions should cease on both sides, (b) Troops

of both sides should return to their original positions, and (c) the 37th Division which entertains more hostile feelings against Japan, should be replaced by some other unit of the 29th Army for the defense of Wan-Ping City. An understanding was also reached that both sides should refrain from developing henceforth incidents of similar nature. Yet, these conditions were nothing but Japanese tactics to delay and thus to gain time. Utilizing this breathing space, units of the Kwantung Army were sent to Peiping and Tientsin area for attack. We detected their conspiracy, and had to order hastily the Division under the command of General Chao stationed in Ta-ming and Ho-Chien in southern Hopei to proceed to Peiping. At that time, General Sung Cho-Yuan was on leave of absence in his home town in Shantung. After my repeated telegrams asking for his return, he arrived in Peiping on the 13th of July. We discussed strategies and policies. War again broke out on the 14th, and more intensified than before. Every day, enemy shelled the Wan-Ping city by artillery, to cover the advance of their infantry, but were all repulsed by our army. On the 25th of July, enemy airplane, in reconnaissance over the Peiping-Taming highways discovered that our troops of large numbers were advancing northward, and the spearhead had already arrived at Manyuan. On the 26th of July, Japanese handed us an ultimatum to the effect that the 37th Division be withdrawn from the Peiping area within 24 hours, failing which they would attack us by large forces. To defend ourselves, we attacked immediately on the 27th enemy troops at Fengtai and in the vicinity of Lukuo-chiao (Marco Polo Bridge). In the same evening, we killed quite a number of Japanese at Fengtai, recaptured the west flank and the south flank of Fengtai, and pressed on near the enemy headquarters there. KATSUKI, Seiji, the Japanese Commander in Chief, ordered Japanese reinforcements from Tungchow and Tientsin, with strong equipment and more than 30 airplanes, to make an onslaught. In the early morning of the 28th, the enemy with the combined forces of the land and air, fiercely attacked Manyuan with all their strength. Large scale hostilities developed with heavy casualties, unprecedented since the outbreak of the incident. Around 2 p.m., most regretfully, General Chao Tung-Yu, Division Commander, General Tung Ling-Kou, Vice Army Commander, were both killed in action. Casualties reached more than 5,000 including both dead and wounded among our officers and soldiers.

Some time before this, repeated telegrams from our Supreme Commander (Generalissimo Chiang) ordered General Sung, Chairman of the Hopei-Chahar Political Council to proceed to Peiping (in southern Hopei) and to direct operations from there. General Sung now acted as directed by these orders. I myself went to Peiping with him in the night of 28th. Considerable success was scored by the Chinese forces in Tientsin, who made their attacks bravely on the 29th and 30th of July. Subsequently

they also evacuated according to orders received. They fell back to the south of Tientsin along the Tientsin-Pukow Railway, while other troops were put up along the Peiping-Hankow Railway. In close collaboration between each other, they began to engage themselves in long-term Resistance against the enemy. This was what happened during the Lukouchiao (Marco Polo Bridge) Incident and the War of Resistance thereafter.

Leading Japanese officers who instigated this Incident were:

KATSUKI, Seiji, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Garrison Forces in Tientsin

KAWABE, Seizo, Brigadier Commander

MUTAGUCHI, Renzan, Regiment Commander

SAKAI, Takashi, Ex-Chief of Staff of the Japanese Garrison Forces in Tientsin

But the instigator at the very beginning of Japanese aggression in north China was DOHIFARA, Kenji, the same man who instigated the "Pukdan Incident of 18 September 1931. All these men should be held responsible for the war of aggression. As to the narcotic policy and various atrocities committed in enemy occupied areas, which according to reports from all sides, were intensified as time went on. Much to my regret I could not produce definite and strong evidences for these activities and atrocities since I had left for operations along Peiping-Hankow, Peiping-Taming, and Tientsin-Pukow Railway lines.

CHING Teh-Chun (sealed)
Formerly Mayor of Peiping and Concurrently
Vice-Commander of the 29th Army

At present, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Military Operations

I hereby certify that the above statement was made in Chungking by General Ching Teh-Chung on this day formerly Mayor of Peiping and concurrently Vice-Commander of the 29th Army; at present, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Military Operations.

Lin Ping-Ping (sealed)
Assistant Director, East Asiatic Bureau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Date: 2 April 1946, Chungking